

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 AID-20 OMB-01 CIAE-00

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RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 DRC-01

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R 191153Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2127

INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY KABUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 10004

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT

SUBJ: PAKISTAN'S POLICY ON KASHMIR

REF: ISLAMABAD 9834, 9702

SUMMARY: GOP FOREIGN SECRETARY STATED THAT BHUTTO'S RECENT STATEMENTS ON KASHMIR, WHILE REAFFIRMING LONG-STANDING POSITION RE SELF-DETERMINATION, DID NOT CONTRAVENE SIMLA AGREEMENT. HE SPECULATED THAT BHUTTO'S CALL FOR "HARTAL" AT SOME FUTURE DATE AND HIS REMARKS RE GUERRILLAS RESPONDED IN LARGE PART TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL COMPULSIONS. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT HE HAD YET TO GET DIRECT READING FROM BHUTTO ON LATTER'S RECENT KASHMIR STATEMENTS, FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID GOP REMAINS COMMITTED TO SIMLA AGREEMENT AND HAS OVERRIDING SELF-INTEREST IN NORMAL RELATIONS WITH INDIA. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING MEETING NOVEMBER 17, CHARGE ASKED GOP FONSEC

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AGHA SHAHI WHETHER HE COULD THROW SOME LIGHT ON SIGNIFI-

CANCE OF PRIMIN BHUTTO'S RECENT VISIT TO KASHMIR AND VARIOUS STATEMENTS HE HAD MADE REGARDING PRESENT AND FUTURE STATUS OF KASHMIR. CHARGE NOTED PRESS REPORTS THAT GOI HAD OFFICIALLY PROTESTED TO GOP REGARDING SOME OF BHUTTO'S STATEMENTS AND INQUIRED WHERE MATTER NOW STOOD. SHAHI ADMITTED FRANKLY THAT HE HAD NOT HAD OCCASION FOR PERSONAL DISCUSSION WITH PRIMIN ON THIS SUBJECT EITHER JUST BEFORE BHUTTO'S RECENT VISIT TO KASHMIR OR SINCE THAT TIME. (BHUTTO WENT ALMOST DIRECTLY FROM KASHMIR TO A WEEK'S TOUR IN NWFP.) HE COULD THEREFORE ONLY SPECULATE REGARDING BHUTTO'S CURRENT THINKING BUT HE THOUGHT HE KNEW ENOUGH ABOUT IT TO SHARE SOME THOUGHTS WITH CHARGE.

2. BHUTTO AND GOP, SHAHI SAID, HAD TO RESPOND TO VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC FACTORS ON KASHMIR. THERE WERE THE UN RESES WHICH CALLED FOR SELF-DETERMINATION BY KASHMIRI PEOPLE. THE THREE ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS FOR THEIR FUTURE STATUS WHICH BHUTTO OFFERED TO PEOPLE OF AZAD KASHMIR WERE CONSISTENT WITH THE CALL FOR SELF-DETERMINATION. NO PAKISTAN LEADER COULD AFFORD TO DISCARD THAT CALL UNILATERALLY. THEN THERE WAS THE SIMLA AGREEMENT WHICH ANTICIPATED INDO-PAK TALKS LEADING TO "DEFINITIVE SETTLEMENT" WHILE RESPECTING ESTABLISHED POSITION OF EACH GOVERNMENT. BHUTTO'S STATEMENTS WERE NOT INCONSISTENT WITH SIMLA AGREEMENT. FINALLY, SHAHI SAID, THERE WAS THE DOMESTIC FACTOR. THERE WERE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION WITHIN AZAD KASHMIR ON FUTURE STATUS OF THE AREA. ALSO, COMPETITION BETWEEN POLITICAL GROUPS IN AZAD KASHMIR WAS CAUSING SOME CONCERN TO GOP, AND PEOPLE THERE WERE FEELING NEGLECTED. TO LARGE EXTENT, SHAHI THOUGHT, BHUTTO WAS BEING RESPONSIVE TO DOMESTIC SITUATION IN AZAD KASHMIR AND HAD DECIDED TO TALK "THEIR LANGUAGE" TO THE KASHMIRIS. THROUGH HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS BHUTTO HAD BEEN THROWING OUT FEELERS TO ASSESS OPINION IN KASHMIR AND GIVE HIM A BASIS FOR PROCEEDING.

3. CHARGE ASKED HOW BHUTTO'S CALL FOR HARTAL (GENERAL STRIKE) AND HIS APPARENT ENCOURAGEMENT TO GUERRILLA

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ACTIVITIES (IF PRESS REPORTS WERE ACCURATE) RELATED TO AGREEMENT AT SIMLA TO ESCHEW VIOLENCE PENDING DEFINITIVE SETTLEMENT ON KAASHMIR. SHAHI DEFENDED THE CALL FOR HARTAL AS NOT BEING IN CONTRAVENTION OF SIMLA AGREEMENT. HARTAL WAS INTENDED TO BE A SILENT, PASSIVE EXPRESSION OF OPPOSITION RATHER THAN VIOLENT INFRINGEMENT OF LAW AND ORDER SUCH AS WAS RULED OUT BY SIMLA. HARTAL WAS A POLITICAL ACT. IF SITUATION WERE TENSE, HARTAL COULD

TEND TO CONTAIN IT BY ALLOWING FOR NON-VIOLENT EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS. SHAHI WAS VAGUER (AND POSSIBLY EMBARRASSED) IN COMMENTING ON BHUTTO'S SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS REMARKS ON GUERRILLA ACTIVITY. HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO DEFINE JUST WHAT WAS PERMITTED AND WHAT WAS RULED OUT BY SIMLA AGREEMENT. POINT WAS THAT BHUTTO WAS POLITICAL ANIMAL AND HE SEEMED TO BE TAKING FUNDAMENTALLY POLITICAL APPROACH IN DEALING WITH PROBLEM WHERE HE HAD TO COMBINE ARTS ON POLITICIAN AND STATESMAN.

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4. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT OUTSIDE OBSERVERS MIGHT HAVE QUESTIONS ON RELATIONSHIP OF BHUTTO'S STATEMENTS ON KASHMIR TO PROSPECTS FOR TRANQUILITY IN SUBCONTINENT, SHAHI AFFIRMED IT WAS IN GOP'S OVERRIDING SELF-INTEREST TO HAVE "NORMAL RELATIONS" WITH INDIA. THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE WAS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR PAKISTAN; IN THE ABSENCE OF PEACE, THE COUNTRY COULD NOT SET ABOUT DOING SO MANY THINGS WHICH IT URGENTLY NEEDED TO DO FOR ITSELF. THIS DID NOT MEAN, HOWEVER, THAT GOP COULD GIVE UP ON PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR

KASHMIR. MEANWHILE, SHAHI ADDED, GOP HAS TO MANAGE WITH A FAIRLY TURBULENT POPULATION. BHUTTO HAS TO DEAL WITH THE PEOPLE IN LANGUAGE THEY UNDERSTAND.

5. AS FOR THE GOI'S PROTEST NOTE ON KASHMIR, SHAHI SAID IT HAD BEEN RATHER MILD AND PROFUNCTORY. IT HAD REFERRED TO A COUPLE OF BHUTTO'S STATEMENTS IN KASHMIR, INCLUDING CALL FOR HARTAL. SHAHI INDICATED THAT GOP INTENDED TO REPLY IN CONCILIATORY TONE, TAKING STANCE
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THAT GOP HAD DONE NOTHING WHICH WAS IN CONTRAVENTION OF SIMLA AGREEMENT.

6. COMMENT: IT IS STILL DIFFICULT FOR US TO PERCEIVE JUST WHAT BHUTTO HAD IN MIND BY HIS POLITICAL FORAY INTO KASHMIR. WE CONTINUE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT HE IS REALISTIC ENOUGH TO REALIZE THAT INDIA WILL NOT GIVE UP ITS PART OF KASHMIR AND THAT PAKISTAN IS NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO TAKE IT AWAY FROM INDIA. HE MAY VERY WELL HAVE BEEN RESPONDING PRIMARILY TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL NEEDS AT THE MOMENT BY RESTATING PAK SUPPORT OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR KASHMIRIS. SOME OBSERVERS HERE HAVE SPECULATED THAT BHUTTO MAY HAVE WANTED TO SHOW INDIA THAT GOP HAD WAYS OF COUNTERING PRESSURE ON PAKISTAN SUCH AS SOME SAW MANIFESTED IN FONMIN SWARAN SINGH'S RECENT VISIT TO KABUL. BUT FONSEC SHAHI'S INSISTENCE THAT GOP REMAINS COMMITTED TO PEACEFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA RINGS TRUE AS THE REALISTICALLY SENSIBLE COURSE. NEW DELHI'S RATHER MILD REACTION TO DATE IS AN ENCOURAGING SIGN. HOWEVER, THAT PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IS NOT ALTOGETHER CLEAR AND WE SHALL CONTINUE TO SEEK ELUCIDATION.
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